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Volume 78

Italian Diction

A Practical Course for
Singers, Students and Teachers

By

A. BUZZI-PECCIA



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VOLUME 78

ITALIAN DICTION

By

A. BUZZI-PECCIA

A Practical Course for
Singers, Students and Teachers
In Two Parts

PART I

Rules for Pronunciation and Enunciation

PART II

Examples from Songs, Operatic Phrases, Recitatives, etc.,
to Complete and Corroborate the Examples Given
in Part I

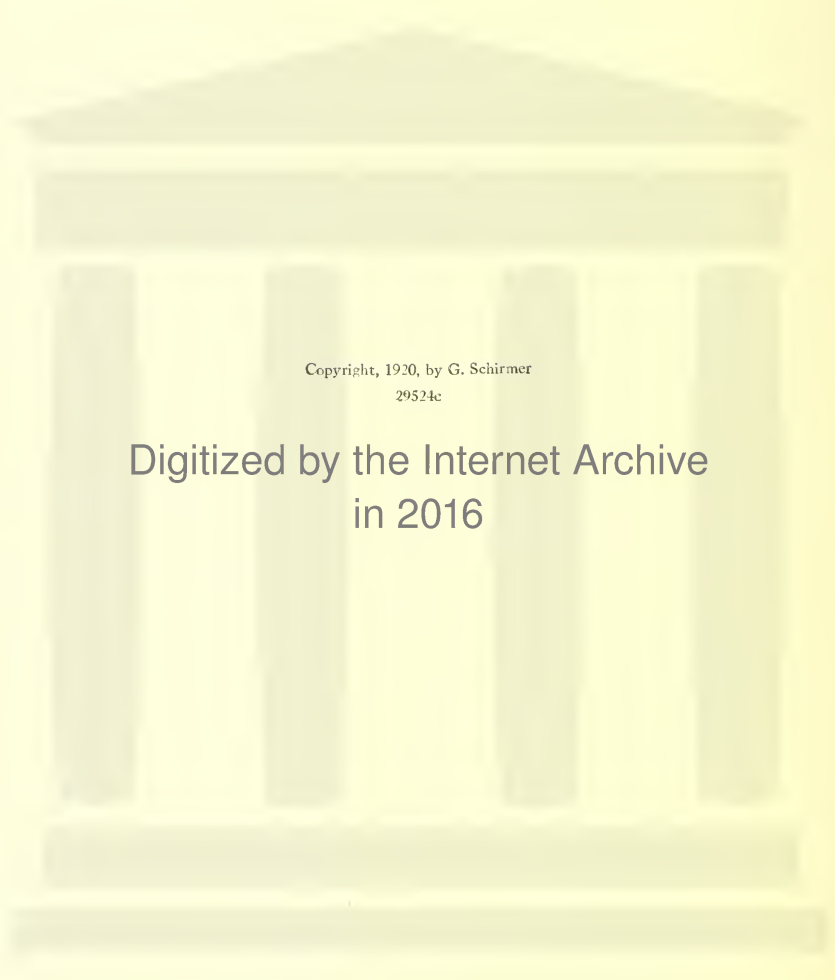


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INTRODUCTION

During my long experience in teaching pupils, coaching artists, rehearsing operas, etc., I have found that in most cases inexpressive or improper singing is due to the neglect, or, rather, to ignorance of the principal elements on which good, correct diction is based artistically and technically. There are pupils who have studied for years, devoting long days and nights to tone-production, who are absolutely ignorant about diction. They go on singing songs without knowing the meaning of the words, or trust to some commonplace translation which in no way interprets the original text—without even taking the trouble to go over the poem, spelling the words, or trying to get the right accent and inflection of them. There are also artists studying repertoire for operatic work, who neither know how to pronounce certain words, nor their meaning, and thus miss all the effects of the dramatic interpretation by reason of a weak or confused diction.

Even at rehearsals in some Grand Opera theatres there are artists whose diction has to be corrected by the conductors; having explained to them the meaning or the dramatic value of the phrases, etc. I have often seen my good friend Toscanini, who is very particular about diction, working hard for hours, explaining, repeating words and phrases, the color of vowels, etc., in order to reach those artistic results which make the performance a real artistic enjoyment.

I believe it a great mistake not to make the pupil study diction more seriously, thus depriving him of all the advantages he might derive from it.

Not only foreigners, but natives, too, have to study diction; for even if they sing in their own language, the public often cannot understand what they say. In fact, it is much to be deplored that very few artists make themselves understood when singing English, their native language.

It is not the fault of the language, but the fault of the singer who neglects to study hard, in order to sing with a clear, effective diction.

Although the English language has not all the advantages of the Italian tongue, it could be sung with as much distinction and expression as any other; but unfortunately many artists sing in the same way that they talk in daily life—they think it right, but it is not so. The English language, being largely monosyllabic—that is, having only one syllable for each word, and each word being composed almost always of only *one vowel* and several consonants—requires more intelligent and patient study to make it clear and melodious.

In France and Germany the study of diction, and consequently of dramatic interpretation, is far more carefully cultivated than in other countries.

The Russians, who are natural polyglots by reason of their language, which includes all the sounds that one can find in all the others, have special aptitude for a good diction in foreign languages and are very expressive in their own.

The Italian relies too much upon the beauty and the singable qualities of his language; and the English try very little to make their diction more effective in expression, more distinct and less hard on the voice.

Study tone-production; have your voice beautifully trained with charm and flexibility; but never forget that diction gives light to the voice and is the life of expression. Correct and effective diction is as important as good tone-production and often more so. Good diction and correct articulation are a great help to the voice as regards both quality and freedom.

How many singers enhance by artistic diction the efficiency, or minimize the shortcomings, of their vocal capabilities! There are many good vocalists with beautiful voices, but to become a great lyric artist one must possess artistic diction with which to express all sentiments, the meaning of the words in all their shadings, and to bring out different styles of music. Many singers are particular only in tone-production, and neglect diction—which is a great mistake.

To acquire effective artistic diction one must go through a preliminary study of the pure emission of vowels, clear articulation of consonants, and connection of words.

Strange though it may seem, diction is not given the consideration that it deserves. Some methods offer a few hints regarding diction, others make no mention of it at all. They devote all their examples and explanations to tone-production. It is indeed strange, because every one knows how important the study of correct and effective diction is—especially in these times, when, because of the evolution of the lyric drama, diction is almost more important than tone-production.

The Italian language is doubtless the most singable because of its pure vowels, distinct consonants, and clear and soft enunciation. But this clearness, purity and softness are not so easily acquired as one might imagine. Not only is it difficult for foreigners, but also for many natives of Italy. There are many Italian singers who do not sing with correct, pure diction. They exaggerate the colors of the vowels, singing them too open or too close, as the case may be. Many have faulty enunciation of single and double consonants. The Venetians and Lombardians seldom pronounce the two consonants distinctly; the Tuscans exaggerate the color of the consonants and have an aspirated

C; the Neapolitans have a tendency to drawl; etc. As a matter of fact, very few people speak their own language correctly, and realize their mistakes only when some one calls their attention to them. This is because the mind, being busy with conveying its conceptions to others, gets careless with regard to correctness of enunciation. The worst of it is that, in singing, all the faults of a defective pronunciation are magnified. Bad enunciation in singing not only spoils the color of the tone, but also the expression of the phrase. By diligent study one can so accustom himself to correct diction, that it becomes second nature.

A great handicap in learning a foreign language is to think that its pronunciation is so much more difficult than one's own. Imagining difficulties confuses the mind, cramps all the oral organs, and impedes free articulation.

One ought to understand that many of these seeming difficulties are only graphical. It is the *graphical difference* in the construction of the words.

For example, an Italian *U* is no more difficult to sing or say than an English *who* or *too*.

The following words are only graphically different, but equally easy to pronounce:

Joy	is the same as	Gioia	in Italian
Chin	" " "	Cinta	" "
Shame	" " "	Scemo	" "
My	" " "	Mai	" "
Lie	" " "	Lai	" "
Old	" " "	Olmo	" "
Tree	" " "	Trito	" "
Out	" " "	Autore	" "

It is the graphical difference which obscures the mental vision of the sound. An Italian would believe it almost impossible to pronounce the words *Knickerbocker*, *knight*, *nought*, *neighborhood*, *laughing*, etc., which, if spelled with the Italian alphabet:

Nicherbocher, *nait*, *not*, *neberud*, *lafing*, he would find absolutely easy; vice versa, the same words would look quite strange if an English-speaking person had to read them in the Italian spelling. So it may be seen that numerous so-called oral difficulties are only mental and not material.

The great advantage of this book comes from its calling the student's attention, in a simple but practical way, to the most important points in *articulation*, *diction* and *expression*.

Once equipped with this necessary knowledge for correct diction and artistic enunciation, the student will be able to understand and appreciate the beauty of artistic diction in others, and will himself become an effective interpreter of musical poems, as a performer, as well as an instructor. The instruction obtained from this book will give good results in a short time; for in this brief method are condensed all the principal rules for correct diction, while avoiding all the unnecessary complications of confusing descriptions which very often prove to be a handicap rather than a help to the student, who, after better acquaintance with the whole matter, finds them very easy to acquire and almost natural to him.

The diligent student will find the task easy to accomplish under the guidance of this method, which is divided into three distinct sections:

THE TECHNICAL	(theoretical descriptions)
THE PRACTICAL	(short phrases for diction)
THE ARTISTIC	(examples of all styles of music and expression given in Part II)

These three sections cover the entire vocal gamut of artistic and correct diction.

A. BUZZI-PECCIA.

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ITALIAN DICTION

by

A. BUZZI-PECCIA

PART FIRST

The Italian Alphabet

Examples of Italian vowels and consonants with their *approximate* corresponding sounds in English.

VOWELS

A is sounded like *ah* in English.

E has *two sounds*: (1) the *open*, as in the English word *fair*; (2) the *close*, as in the English word *pain*.

I like *ee* in *beet*; *i* in *bit*.

O has *two sounds*: (1) the *open*, *o*, (2) the *close*, *aw*.

O long like *aw* or *oh* (without the vanish *u*); *o* short as in *opinion*.

U is sounded like *oo* in *tool*, *boot*; short like *u* in *bull*.

PURE VOWELS

The vowels are the fundamental sounds of all speech, and are uttered almost instinctively, for they are produced by the simple flow of air from the lungs (which air has been formed into sound in the larynx) and the lengthening, shortening and narrowing of the resonators (the pharynx, and the oral and nasal cavities).

In the Italian language there are no mixed vowels; that is, the combination of vowels as in French, where *two* or *three vowels* form *one sound*, like *ai*, *ou*, *eau*, sounding respectively like *E*, *U*, *O* (as in *faire*, *toujours*, *beau*), or as in English, where *one vowel* combines the sound of *two vowels* (like *i* in *life*, etc.). In Italian *each vowel* has a *pure*, *distinct sound* on which the voice rests steadily.

They are subject to some changes in color (*open* or *close*) and in *length* (according to their position before a single or double consonant, or to the accent of the word); but the *root of the vowel never changes*.

In order to make the examples clearer, we shall mark each vowel bearing the Tonic accent, on which the voice dwells longer, with an acute accent (´), excepting where the accented vowel is final, when it bears a grave accent, as in *già, giù, libertà*, etc.

CONSONANTS

General Rule:

Even the hard consonants are somewhat softer than in English; the soft consonants are very delicate. Pronounce two consonants distinctly: *ef'fe, ac'ca, el'le, em'me, en'ne, er're*. Double letters belonging to distinct syllables must both be pronounced, sounding each distinctly, as in *Giusep'pe, Rus'sia, Giovan'ni, profes-so're, repub'blica, don'-na*. The only consonants that are not doubled are *h* and *q*.

B is like the same letter in English.

C is like *k*, before *a, o, u*, or another consonant except *c*, as below. **C** followed by the vowels *e, i*, is pronounced like *ch* in the words *cherry, chilly*. **C** before *a, o, u*, or a consonant, is pronounced as in the words *capitale, consonante, cuoco, classe,acca,acqua*. **C** before *e, i* (*ce, ci*), like a soft *ch*, as in *Cicerone, cena, Lucia, città, cinque, Francia, dolce, Francesco*.

C followed by *e* or *i*, is pronounced like *tch* in *match*; thus, *cia, cio, ciu*, are pronounced *cha, cho, choo*.

CC before *e* or *i* (*cee, cci*), is pronounced like *t-ch*, as in *eccellente, accento, eccetera, eccito*.

Ch followed by *e* or *i*, is pronounced like English *k*, as in *che, chi, perchè, repubbliche, maschile*.

D and **F** are like the English *d* and *f*.

G, like *c*, is hard before *a, o, u*, or before another consonant except *l* and *n*; e. g., *sugli* (pron. *sool'-ye*), *bagno* (pron. *bahnyoh*, the *gn* like *n* in *cañon*).

G when followed by *a, o, u*, or a consonant, is pronounced hard, as in the words *gas, golfo, grande, gusto*.

G when followed by *e* or *i* is like *j* in English or like *g* in *gem*, as in the words *paragi, Giuseppe, Germania, genitivo*.

GG followed by *e* or *i* (*gge, ggi*) is pronounced like *dg* in *lodge*, articulating forcibly—*coraggio, reggente*.

Gh followed by *e* or *i*, has the sound of *g* in *go*, as in *Margherita, interroghi*.

Gl followed by *i*, and in all words in which *i* is followed by another vowel, is pronounced like *lli* in *brilliant*, as in the words *famiglia, moglie*. But in all words in which *gl* is followed by *a, e, o* or *u*, it is pronounced like *gl* in *glimmer*.

Gn followed by a vowel is like *ni* in *minion*, as in the words *campagna, ciampagna, compagnia, ogni*.

Già, Giò, Giù, are pronounced like *jah, joh, joo*.

Gua, Gue, Gui are pronounced like *gwa, gwei, gwee*.

H is mute: *ah, hanno, ho, oh*. It is otherwise used only to indicate that the preceding consonant is hard, before the vowels *e* and *i*.

J is like *y* in *you*, and is considered a vowel. It is used instead of *ii* at the end of words, and sounds like *ee* in the English word *fee*, each *e* being distinctly pronounced.

L, M, N and **P** are like the corresponding English letters.

Qu is pronounced as in the English words *quality, question*, or the Italian words *quantità, qui pro quò, quello, questo, and quinta*. **Q** is always followed by *u*.

R at the beginning of words, or in the middle when it begins a syllable, is like *r* in *ruin, marine*. At the end of words, or when it ends a syllable, or is preceded by another consonant or doubled, it has a rolling sound. Between two vowels it is pronounced soft—*caro, cero, cura*. **R** at the beginning and end of a syllable is pronounced like *rr*, as in *Roma, articolo, parlar, Enrico*.

S between two vowels sounds soft (like *z*), as in *rosa, casa, Luisa*. At the beginning of words, or when preceded or followed by another consonant, or when doubled, it is pronounced sharp as in *sister*. In the final syllable of all words ending in *ese, use, usa*, it is pronounced like *s* in the English word *rose*. In the last syllable of all adjectives ending in *oso, osa*, it preserves its sharp sound.

Sc, Sci are pronounced as in *scena, scenario, sciampagna*, the *sc* sounding like *sh* in *shall*.

Sch followed by *e, i*, is pronounced like *sk*.

Scia, Scio, Sciu are pronounced like *shah, shoh, shoo*.

T is always hard.

V is like the English *V*.

W and **X** are not found in the Italian alphabet.

Z—General Rule: Beginning a word, or when single, it is like *ds* in *Windsor*. When preceded by a consonant, or followed by two vowels, or doubled, it is pronounced sharp, like *ts* in the word *benefits*.

Exercises for the Enunciation and Connection of the Vowels, Diphthongs and Consonants

Vowels

Sostenuto

Passing slowly from one vowel to another without changing the direction of the voice while changing the shape of the vowel. In singing the vowels **E** and **I** do not close the nostrils, for this would produce a *nasal tone*.

Pronounce A as in father; E like ai in pain; I like i in machine; O like o in old; U like oo in too.



Attacco

Must be pure and clear all through the five tones.



Slancio

In the exercise on octaves care should be taken to blend the color of the vowels, which changes in passing from one register of the voice to another, especially toward the upper part of the voice.



Portamento

Carrying the vowels without slurring.



All the following examples given for the enunciation of vowels and consonants are written for the middle of the voice, but can be performed in a higher or lower key according to the needs of the singer.

One may perform them on a single tone, if preferred; in this case it would be better to practise them through a selected chromatic scale in order to employ all those sections of the voice in which it is difficult to fix a vowel or to articulate a consonant.

Sopranos should not try to sing on words above **G**, an exercise which would strain their voices; other voices (Mezzo), Tenor, Baritone and Bass, similarly.

The short phrases, constructed without literary connection, are so made that they may serve as a technical study in articulation, and not for expression; but if the pupil (once possessing freedom of articulation) would practise them, giving the expression according to the meaning of the words, it would benefit him greatly as a first step toward artistic diction; besides, it will help him to get rid of that irksome feeling of mechanical drudgery which so often prevents his combining artistic with technical work.

A

Separate the jaws so far as to admit the thumb between the teeth; keep the lips perfectly still. The tongue should lie perfectly flat and inactive at the bottom of the oral cavity. It must be free, but care must be taken in singing not to make the tone too white.

Exercise on A

Ama, Amare, Ala, Lama, Spada, Arma, Cara, Mano, Pazza



E

The tongue rises horizontally, with the arch of the palate smaller than for A, but without altering their relative position.

E has *two sounds, open and close*. Followed by *two consonants*, it is *always open*.

Exercise on E

Close sound

Ébe, Béne, Séme, Péne, Séra

Open sound

Élla, Bélla, Sénnà, Pénnè, Sérra

Carefully distinguish between the **close sound** and the **open**.



I

I resounds in the nasal cavities. It has only one color. The palate is still lower than in E and the tongue almost touches the arch of the palate.

Exercise on I

Mimi, Mia, Ridi, Lidi, Rimini, Malia

One should avoid making it *too close*, or *too tight in front*, or too much on the teeth, or back on the palate; all are bad emissions of the vowel I.

Moderato



Mi-ti in-ni li-di. Vi-vi sor-ri-di o mia Mi-mi.

Di qui, di li si Vi-ci-ni co-si. Ad-di-o.

Scin-til-la sfa-vil-li il di. Dio li-ri-u-ni.

O

One can form a *broad O* on the hard palate without the coöperation of the lips. The *close O* requires the round shaping of the lips. There are three shades of O, but only two principal ones: *open* and *close*.

Exercise on O

Open

Dónna, Vióla, Rósa, Sónno, Aróma

Close

Dóno, Góla, Róssa, Sóno, Róma



Don-na do-na ro-sa ros-sa

Lo spo-so non o-sò, no no.

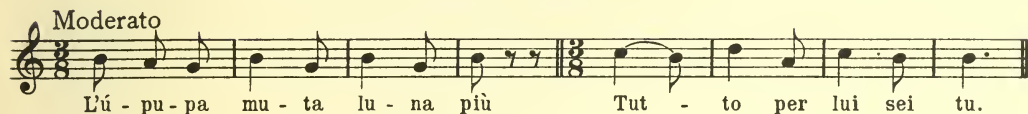
L'uo-mo buo-no non tor-nò.

U

U is invariable; lips closer than in O, but not too closed, nor too dark, which would give a *falsetto* resonance.

Exercise on U

Lúna, Úva, Úno, Úpupa, Túo, Súo, Tu, Giù, Più



Diphthongs

A diphthong is two vowels which are pronounced almost simultaneously; a triphthong is three such vowels.

In Italian the diphthong or triphthong is always represented by two or three vowels, respectively, as in *mió, miei, suoi, aurora, Euridice*.

In English there are diphthongs which are graphically represented by *one single vowel*, like *i*, *y* (my life), *u* (duty).

A group of vowels may form a diphthong, but, to be exact, they often are not a real diphthong. In singing, the musical accent fixes the tonic accent of the vowels, thereby making the difference unnoticeable.

The only difference is in the tonic accent, which makes the vowel enunciated *longer, shorter, very distinct, or weak*, according to its place in the word. Nearly all words containing a diphthong, have the tonic accent on the first vowel, like *Mí-o, Tú-o, Mâ-i, Sú-a, Dì-o*.

In other words, the tonic accent changes according to the quantity of the syllables as in *Anatomía, Scarabéo, Muséo, Fruscío, Farmacia, Elógio, Orológio, Nôia, Gióia*, etc.

A grave accent (˘) on the last vowel makes the preceding vowel short, as in *Già, Più, Può, Andò, Passò, Sarà, Potrà, Finì*, etc.

Exercise on Diphthongs

Uómìni, Auléntè, Suóra, Fiáccola, Aíta, Ideále, Cuóca, Miagoláre, Odiáre, Euridíce, Diésis, Suói



Hiatus and Elision

The Hiatus is a succession of vowels without connecting consonants. It is considered unmusical, as may be demonstrated in singing phrases like *lo cantava a anna; sorge Ebe e entra*, etc. In such cases the artist makes a summary elision of one or two vowels.

Elision occurs when *two* syllables are contracted into *one*. For instance, *Ella ebbe, Gli alberi, Anche egli, Quando anche, La alba* and *Agli uomini*, which words with elision would be *Ell'ebbe, Gl'alberi, Anch'egli, Agl'uomini*, etc.

In musical scores one very frequently finds cases of elision (of consonants, or vowels, and the graphical elision where vowels or consonants are replaced by an apostrophe), owing to the necessity of connecting several words which have to be sung on a few tones.

Consonants

While there is no difference between the Italian and English consonants, there is a distinct difference in the articulation of them.

The Italian enunciates all consonants with the lips and tongue in such a way that the voice is helped to stay in front. The Englishman adds to this a great motion in shaping the mouth and lowering the jaw, which renders it much harder to keep the voice in front and maintain pure and distinct enunciation. Besides, in Italian there is a great difference in articulation between *single* and *double* consonants, for they change both the color of the preceding or following vowel and the meaning of the word.

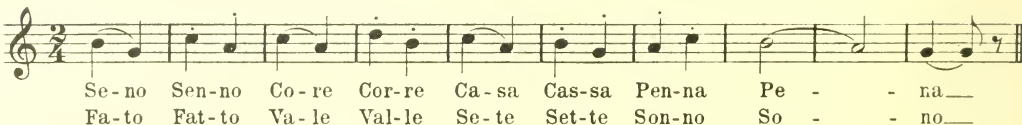
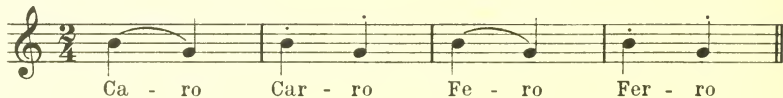
For the articulation of *double consonants*, in order to make them *distinct* and *effective*, one has to increase the pressure of lips or tongue.

In the case of double **LL**, keep the tongue fixed on the palate and upper teeth, in order to prolong the pressure and have a stronger articulation. For double **MM** keep the lips strongly closed for the duration of the articulation.

The sensation is similar to accentuating the *second L* in the first case, and the *second M* in the other case. This rule can be applied to all double consonants, except **RR**.

Exercise on Single and Double Consonants

<i>Single</i>		<i>Double</i>		<i>Single</i>		<i>Double</i>
Rosa (Rose)	-	Rossa (Red)		Vale (Worthy)	-	Valle (Valley)
Sono (I am)	-	Sonno (Sleep)		Coro (Chorus)	-	Corro (I run)
Fato (Fate)	-	Fatto (Made)		Celo (I hide)	-	Cello (Instrument)
Pena (Pain)	-	Penna (Pen)		Caro (Dear)	-	Carro (Cart)
Casa (House)	-	Cassa (Box)		Seno (Bosom)	-	Senno (Wisdom)
Sete (Thirst)	-	Sette (Seven)		Stile (Style)	-	Stille (Drops)
Fero (Fierce)	-	Ferro (Iron)		Tori (Bulls)	-	Torri (Towers)
Anelo (Anxiety)	-	Anello (Ring)		Dono (Gift)	-	Donna (Woman)



One can easily see the importance of the difference between *one* or *two* consonants, and learn how to pronounce them correctly in order to avoid making very bad mistakes. All the words given as examples must be repeated until the student is fully familiar with them.

Exercise on Consonants

(*Single and Double*)

Enunciate first all the consonants with the speaking voice, then sing them with a clear emission of tone.

All the words must be articulated very distinctly, with great freedom of action in the jaw, lips, tongue and in shaping the mouth.

Clear articulation of the consonants should never interfere with a free emission of the voice. On the contrary, the consonants are a great help in carrying the voice and fixing the tone on the next vowel, if the voice is well placed.

Wrong articulation may spoil the emission of a well-placed voice.

Single and Double Consonants

in alphabetical order

B (labial)

Exercise on B

Single

Ábile, Bácio, Libáre, Bíbita

Double

Lábbra, Bíbbia, Bábbó, Sábbia

Other Combinations

Sbrigáre, Bómba, Sborsáre,
Sbadigliáre, Sbrogliáre, Bisbigliáre

Moderato

Bab - bo li - bro ba - cio bis - bi - glia - re rim - bom - ba - re

C (lingual-dental)

It is one of the most difficult consonants, because of its many changes in enunciation.

Exercise on C

C sounds *hard*, like **K**, before a, o and u, as in **C**aro, **C**oro, **C**ura, **C**acao.

C sounds *soft*, like the English **Ch**, before e and i, as in **C**ima, **C**era, **C**eci, **C**ielo.

It is very hard for foreigners to enunciate those last words with a relaxed, soft **C**. They enunciate it too dry, too tight or too short, touching the palate with the point of the tongue *almost* as for **T**, instead of having the tongue relaxed, just touching the palate softly with all the width of the tongue, as in "watch".

C sounds like the English **Sh** when preceded by an **S** before **I** or **E**, as in **Scemáre**, **Sciénza**, **Discénta**, **Lasciáre**, **Strisciáre**, **Sciagúra**, **Scéndere**, **Sciogliere**, **Scéna**.

C is always hard before **a**, **o** and **u**, as in **Scaváre**, **Scováre**, **Scúsa**.

Exercise on Different Sounds of C

Il cuore dólce di chí ci cúra. Élla ha sciólto lo schéma délla scéna che si accínse a cercáre e ciascuno conósce la ricca súa ménte. Lo sciógliere e l'asciugársi déi ghiácci schiúde la vía per l'ascéndere álle rócche délle montágne roccióse cóme ágli scógli del máre.

Écco, éccoci. Mésci il caro liquóre, scintillánte.



D (lingual-dental)

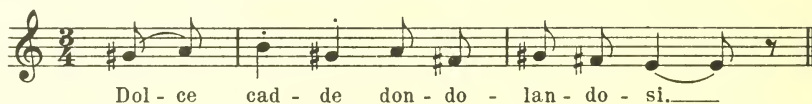
Exercise on D

D is an easy consonant. Care must be taken not to pronounce it too hard, so that it would sound like a **T**. It should be pronounced very lightly and gently, as in **Dádi**, **Dólce**, **Ónde**, **Dondolársi**.

D is *more strongly accentuated* before **I**: **Dío**, **Díto**, **Dizióne**.

D is also *soft* when preceded by **S**: **Sdegnóso**, **Sdentato**, **Desdemóna**.

D is *strong* when doubled: **Addío**, **Cádde**, **Turíddu**.



F (labial-dental)

Exercise on F

Singles

Féde, Áfa, Sfogáre, Furfánte, Stúfa,
Sfioráre

Doubles

Effétto, Affáre, Soffiáre, Soffocáre,
Stóffa



G (lingual dental)

Exercise on G

G has the peculiarities of C, sounding hard before a, o and u (Gára, Góla, Úgola), and soft before i and e (like the English J), as in Gíga, Gélo, Giúngere, Gingillo, Giúdice, Disgiúngere.

G is hard before H: Ghirlánda a léghe intríghi.

G takes a special sound before an N, like ni in Onion: Signore, Gnómi, Compágnio, Bágnio, Magnífico, Légno.

G has another special sound when followed by L, like lli in Brilliant: Gíglío, Móglie, Famíglia, Battagliá, Táglio, Továgliá, Égli, Imbróglío.

G is hard in Gla, Glo, Glu: Glútina, Glóbo, Gladiatóre, Glicerína.

Note: "Glicerína" is an exception.

Exercise on Different Sounds of G

La gára giúnge déi gladiatóri. Il seggio délla famíglia signoríle. Che giúnge allo sgelo déi ghiácci.

E - gli giun - ge.

Gi - ga ge - lo go - la ga - la glo - bo La - ghi le - ghe le - gno ba - gno

so - gno Fug - go fug - gi ghiac - cio gi - glio Sge - lo Si -

gno - re ma - gni - fi - co Giuo - ca col gin - gil - lo

H (palatal)

Exercise on H

H is never aspirated; it serves as the sign of the verb *avere* (to have): **Io ho** (I have), **Tu hai** (thou hast), **Egli ha** (he has), or after or between vowels in exclamations: **Oh! Ah! Ahi! Ahimè!**

Oh! - mè! Tu l'hai, es - si l'han - no, io l'ho.

Per - chè? Per chi? La - ghi, le - ghe.

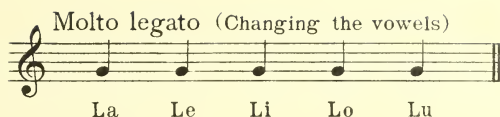
L (lingual-palatal)

L should be articulated without lowering the jaw too much, with a distinct but not too hard a stroke of the tongue.

Exercise on L

To acquire a good articulation, avoiding an unnecessary lowering of the jaw.

I - li E - le O - lo
A - la



Exercise on Different Sounds of L

Singles

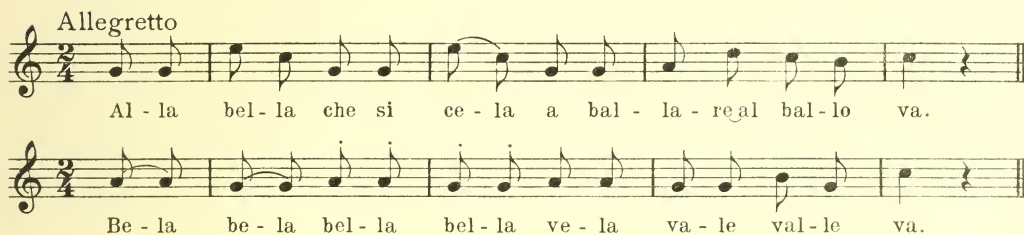
(Very light stroke of the tongue)

Ála, Pála, Cále, Céla, Móle, Mílo, Abéle

Doubles

(Very distinct, strong stroke)

Álla, Pállida, Cálle, Célla, Mólle, Mílle, Arabélla



M (labial)

Closing the lips *very lightly* when *single*— *closer* and *stronger* when *doubled*.

Exercise on M

To develop an effective action of lips.



Accentato

Am - ma Em - me Im - mi Om - mo

Legato

Mi mi Me me Ma ma Mo mo Mu mu

Forte

mam - ma mim - mi mem - me mom - mo

Presto e leggero

Ma me mi me mo Mo me mi me ma

Di salto

Ma ma ma Me me me Mi mi mi Mo mo mo

Exercise on M

Singles (lightly)

M'áma, Dáma, Míma, Amóre, Grámo,
Umano, Legáme, Géme, Smodáto

Doubles (strongly)

Mámma, Dámmi, Dilémma, Grámmo,
Múmmia, La gámma, Gémme

N (labial-dental)

Sweet and light, when single. Tongue strongly pressed against the upper teeth, when doubled.

Exercise on N

Singles (lightly)

Máno, Nóno, Váni, Páne, Gióvani, Sáno, Nina

Doubles (strongly)

Hánno, Nónno, Vánni, Pánni, Giovánni, Sánno, Nínna

Intíngere, Snidáre, Snodáre

Exercise on M and N

Moderato

A - ma - mi, dam - mi la ma - no. Se ge - me Gem - ma e

Ni - na si nin - na. Don - na, per - do - na, mi man - ca l'a - mor.

Mosso

Per va - ni van - ni. Il non - no no no.

So - no nel son - no; no no no no no.

P (labial)

Gently but distinctly connecting the lips when *single*, strongly when *double*; but avoid making it sound like an explosion of breath. The only difference between **B** and **P** is that with **B** a vocal sound is already heard when the mouth opens, while with **P** the sound begins only after the mouth has been opened. With **B** the lips are opened by the voice and with **P** simply by the air; that is why we recommend avoiding the noise of an explosion of the breath.

Exercise on P

Singles

Cápo, Pápa, Tópo, Pípa, Dópo, Scópo, Psíche

Doubles

Cáppa, Páppa, Tóppa, Póppa, Dóppio, Scóppio, Tráppole

Q (labial-palatal)

Q sounds like Cue, Cua, Cui, Cuo

Quésto, Quéllò, Quási, Ácqua, Qualità, Acquaréllò, Ovúnque, Quacquero, Quiproquò

Exercise on P and Q

Allegretto

To-pi top-pe sco-pe scop-pi Psi-che po-sa e poi ap-par

Allegro

Que-sto Quel-lo Qua-si qua-si Ac-qua-rel-lo Qua-li-tà

R (lingual-palatal)

R is very difficult for English people, because they seldom roll it, especially when it comes after a vowel. It is very slightly rolled when *single* – just a gentle touch on the palate with the tip of the tongue. It is very distinct and prolonged when *double*, but never so exaggerating the rolling of the tongue as to give the sound of a rolling carriage or a drum. There are two kinds of “**R**”, the lingual (*pure*) and the uvular (*impure*). With the *pure R* the vibrating part is the tip of the tongue, the uvula *remaining passive*; it is pronounced by vibrating the tip of the tongue, which is held flat in the mouth, with the tip somewhat elevated. With the *impure R* it is the uvula that vibrates, the tongue remaining passive. An English gentleman used to say: “Our **R** is something between AH and nothing.”

Exercise on R

Singles

Míra, Éra, Féro, Amóre, Ráro, Moríre, Marmor

Doubles

Mírra, Érra, Férrò, Morrò, Narráre, Guérre, Marrónò

Others

Rarefáre, Frágola, Frémere, Sradicáre, Sbrogliársi, Rídere, Sdrucioláre, Svernáre, Sfracelláre, Rifioríre, Sfrondáre, Rimirársi.

Exercise for rolling the R (*Single and Double*)

Lento

Tro tri tra tru, tra tri tri tra tre

Strong

Tro ro ro tri ri ri tre re re Tro ro tro ro ro Tre re tre re re
Tri ri tri ri ri Tra ra tra ra ra

Lighter: Gra gro gre gri gra re ri gru re ra gra-re - ri Bro bru bre Bre ro ri

Leggero: I ri E re O ro — *Forte:* Tor-re Ter-ra Fer-ro

Ter-ro-re Tar-ta-ri-co Pre-da Por-ta Bir-ra

Soft: Mi-ra Ma-re Muo-re Ma-dre Au-ro-ra Ra-ri Ro-ri-da Ri-ma

Mixed

Cor-re-re Rie-de-re Ar-re-star-si

Moderato

Scher-za-re sver-na-re er-ra-re Ar-mar-si Mo-ri-re d'a -

mor Sra-di-ca-re sdruc-cio-la-re Fra-gran-te sus-sur-ra - re

S (lingual-dental)

Exercise on S

Soft (when between two vowels)

Rósa, Cása, Ósa, Spésa, Odesióni

Hard (in starting or when doubled)

Róssa, Cássá, Óssa, Spéssó, Osséssó, Sái, Sapére, Sáno

Sc sounds like English Sh when before i or e: Scégliere, Scéna, Sciógliere, Sciocco, Scivoláre, etc.
(See Exercise on **C**.)

T (lingual-dental)

T is formed by placing the lateral edges of the tongue against the upper molars and pressing its tip against the root of the upper incisors. Care must be taken to have a *neat, clean articulation*, avoiding the sound of *tch*.

Exercise on T

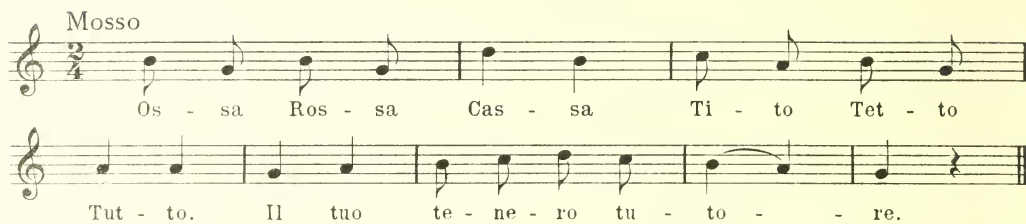
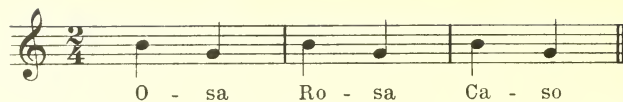
Single

Sète, Réte, Móto, Brúto, Fáto, Láto, Títo

Double

Sétte, Réttó, Móttó, Brúttó, Fáttó, Látté, Tétto

Exercise on S and T



V (labial-dental)

Exercise on V

Single

Éva, Ávi, Viavài, Avère, Vivido, Sviàre

Double

Enviva, Ávvi, Avvocato, Avvenénte, Avvizzito, Avviàre

Z (lingual-dental)

Exercise on Z

Single

Zío, Zélo, Zingara, Diplomazía, Zanzàrra

Double

Pézzo, Pázzo, Púzzo, Pózzo, Pízzi

Z is formed by placing the mouth in the position required for **T**, but with this difference, that the tip of the tongue is not pressed against the roots of the upper teeth.

Double **Z** is pronounced like TZ, as in **Pézzo** (Petzo).

Exercise on V and Z



Enunciating and Connecting Words in Singing

The characteristic feature of the vowels is that their sound can be continued as long as the voice lasts; the sounding air-column being variously modified, but never interrupted in the resonator. With the consonants just the reverse is the case; they are formed by impeding or interrupting the stream of air, or by narrowing the oral passage. That is the reason why we cannot sing on consonants or make a *portamento di voce* with them.

In singing, words are divided into syllables as they are in speaking; but there is a distinct difference in connecting consonants from one syllable to another. The difference is due to the fact that in singing the voice rests longer on vowels than in speaking; consequently, the consonants between vowels must be carried to the next part of the syllable, in such a way as to form a syllable with the following vowel. This procedure in singing is invariable in every language, in words having single or double consonants. Consequently, the following phrase, *When I was in love with ardor*, must be divided in singing - *Whe - nI - wo - si - nlo - vui - tha - rdor*, the voice dwelling on the vowels, and the consonants acting like a bridge which connects the vowels one with another.

I give this little example in English to make it clear; and this rule applies to all languages.

The following Italian phrases: *Bella notte d'incanti Dolcemente parlì al cor* must be divided in singing: *Be - lla no - tte di - nca - nti Do - lce - me - nte pa - rli a - lcor*.

Connecting Words

Andantino

Be - lla no - tte di - nca - nti do - lce - me - nte pa - rli a - lcor.

A few examples are given below to show briefly the importance of diction in expressing sentiments, and how the diction in changing the words changes entirely the color of the voice and the expression of the same musical phrase.

La vita è bella (happy) *Io t'amo* (I love) *Il cor dolente* (sad) *Io temo* (I fear) *Avrem vittoria* (warlike) *Io t'odio* (I hate) *Mia dolce speme* (lovingly) *Il dolce sogno d'un cielo seren* (legato dolce) *Un pianto m'affanna* (sobbing) *La gioia m'inebbria* (with joy) *Ohimè! Ohimè! mi manca in petto il cor* (doloroso: sadly) *Ah, ah, ah, ah!* *Da ridere mi fa* (gaily laughing) *Salta gira più non resta* (leggero staccato: lightly) *Là del mare la tempesta* (forte marcato: heavily) *L'amorosa bella che mi fa morir* (staccato sospeso: repeat legato dolce)

Once a student is familiar with all the important points contained in this book, when he has acquired the *correct sound of vowels* and the *articulation of consonants*, the *inflection*, *connection*, *accent* and *expression* of words in singing, he may begin to practise the examples given in the second part of the book.

Different Expressions with the same Phrase

Moderato

dolce *piano* *aspro*

Io t'a - mo! Io te - mo! Io t'o - dio!

(Love) (Fear) (Hate)

Andantino grazioso

(Legato) Il dol - ce so - gno d'un cie - lo se - ren.

(Staccato leggero) Un pic - ciol pun - to che pas - sa lon - tan.

Moderato

(Sadly) Il pian-to m'af - fan - na. (Joyously) La gio - ia m'in - eb - bria!

(Sobbing) Ohi - mè! Ohi - mè! Mi man - ca in pet - to il cor!

(Laughing) Ah! ah! ah! ah! Da ri - de - re mi fa!

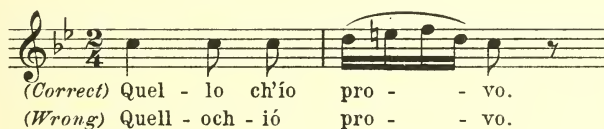
(Dramatic) Là del ma - re la tem - pe - sta. (Gay) Sal - ta, sal - ta, gi - ra, dan - za.

(Happy) La vi - ta è bel - la! (Sweet) Mia dol - ce spe - me.

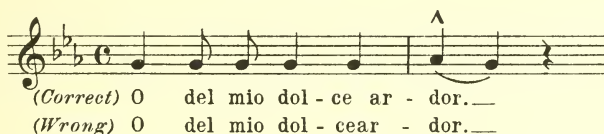
False Accents and Wrong Connections

In order to avoid false accents and wrong connections, one should read carefully and spell one by one all the words of the poem *before singing*; it will make the text so much clearer phonetically, and the diction more effective, besides being more correct, even as heard by people not well acquainted with the language.

The accent on **o** (in "io") instead of **i** would make the phrase sound like *quel' occhio* — instead of *quello ch'io*.

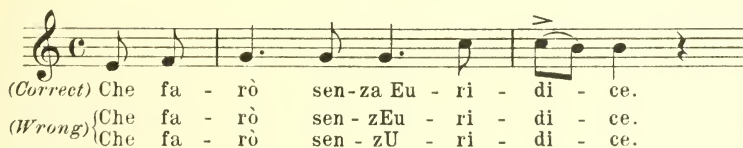


The accent on **e**, almost missing the **c** in the word *dolce*, would make a bad connection, and the voice would not sound clear on *ce ar*. It is also bad to accent the second **o** in the following phrase, *bramato oggetto*, pronouncing *bramat' oggetto* (missing final **o** in *bramato*).

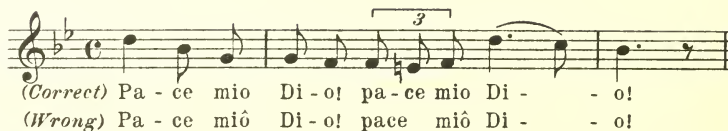


Connecting the words *senza Euridice* without a clear passage thro' a **E u**, and putting the accent on the **u**, would certainly make a bad sound.

There are singers who not only make a bad connection, but entirely leave out one of the vowels, saying *sen-zeu*, or *sen-zau*, which is very bad.



Diphthongs like *mio, dio, suo, lui, noi*, must be accented on the *first vowel*, whether the word has to be sung on *one* or *two tones*.



It is quite difficult for foreigners to enunciate correctly and distinctly words with three vowels, like *miéi, suói*, putting the accent on the second vowel, but enunciating the other two distinctly.



Portamento

Portamento means to carry one vowel from one tone to another with a slight anticipation of the following tone — repeating the vowel in a legato way. Portamento doesn't mean *strisciare* (to slur) from one tone to another, as with a slurred chromatic scale.

Portamento



Note Ripetute

(Repeated tones)

To make a distinct repetition of tones while singing with words, one has to repeat the vowel as well in a *legato* way.

Note ripetute

Written

Non ha gio - - ia - il - co - - re

Performed

Non ha gio - o - o - ia - a i - il co - - re

Repeating the words in a *staccato* way, which is a distinctly different effect.

Di ta - le a-mor che dir - - - si

etc.

d'a - mor che in - ten - do io so - - - la

etc.

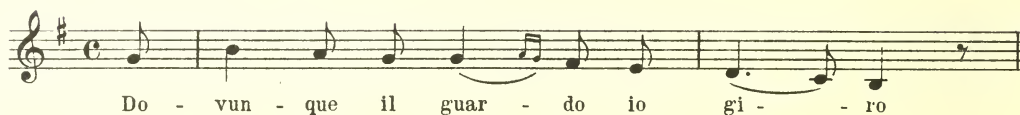
There are cases in which, to make the phrase more distinct, clear or graceful, one has to repeat the vowels; as in some phrases with dotted notes, or a marked accent to emphasize, etc.

So-spi-ro e ge-mo sen-za vo-ler, Pal-pi-to e
So-spi-ro e ge-e-mo sen-za vo-ler, Pal-pi-to e

tre - mo sen - za sa - per; Non tro - vo pa - ce.
tre - e - mo sen - za sa - per; Non tro - vo pa - a - ce.

Gruppettos and Grace-notes

Gruppettos and grace-notes, as a rule, are sung on the last vowel which precedes the next word:



Unless the grace-notes start the phrase:

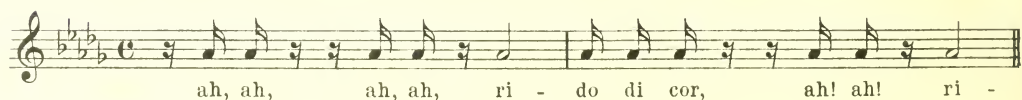


Diction Staccato Marcato

In these cases the articulation must be very *clean cut (distinct)*, but the staccato must be performed by the diction (articulation of the tongue and lips) and not with the voice.

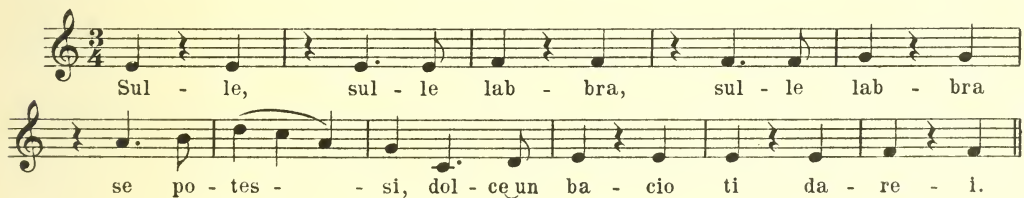


Staccato with the voice is performed in laughing passages.



Breaking Words

One of the principal rules in correct singing is not to break words by breathing, cutting the phrase, etc., which is absolutely wrong; but there are cases where the breaking of the words becomes a necessity, in order to express sentiments of sorrow and anxiety, laughing, etc.



Light diction on the edge of the lips or on the surface of a whispering voice.

(*Barbiere di Siviglia*, Act 3: Rossini)

Allegro

p

Zit-ti zit-ti, pia-no pia-no, non fac-cia-mo con-fu-sio-ne; per la sca-la del bal-co-ne presto andia-mo via di qua.

Great elasticity of lips and tongue; quick articulation; very fast, but very clean and distinct.

(*Barbiere di Siviglia*, Act 1: Rossini)

Presto

Ah bra-vo, Fi-ga-ro, bra-vo, bra-vis-si-mo! ah bra-vo, Fi-ga-ro, bra-vo, bra-vis-si-mo! a te for-tu-na, a te for-tu-na, a te for-tu-na non man-che-rà.

Mispronunciation of Words

I believe it useful to call the attention of students, as well as of some artists, to some bad habits that foreigners have in pronouncing Italian words.

Mispronunciation of words gives a false inflection to the voice; consequently the efficiency, the intensity of expression, are lost.

Some artists believe that when singing to an audience in a foreign language, the audience will not notice the difference between correct or incorrect diction. This is a great mistake. The audience may not *understand the words*, but it receives the impression of an exaggerated, rough or flabby inflection, which doesn't sound true.

Suppose an Italian should sing the English phrase

“I love you with all my heart”

pronouncing it thus:

“I lof few vith hall my yard”

or thus:

“Ill ovyou vis alm y art”

The public would surely feel the lack of the proper inflection, except (possibly) in *coloratura* style, when artists take all sorts of liberties on account of the difficulty of pronouncing on rolling scales, high top tones, etc. Bad diction deprives the singer of the greater part of his effect on the public.

Following are a few examples of the most common faults that English-speaking people have in singing Italian.

First of all comes the fatal *r* and the *m*; many times they are *doubled* by the singer, who believes that thus his diction becomes more clear and effective.

The Italian language is very easy, in a way, by reason of its pure vowels and distinct consonants; but also very difficult, because it must be *sweet* and *distinct* at the same time. When *foreign* singers try to make it sound *sweet*, they *miss almost all the double consonants* — and many singles, too — and drag the vowels. When they try to make it *distinct*, they *exaggerate all the consonants*, making them double when they are single and pronouncing three *R's* when there are two, or disconnecting the consonants, which is still worse. For instance, they pronounce —

Signorrina or signorinna, instead of signorina;

Ammare or amarre, instead of amare. Very often, too, they put an *r* before *m*, and pronounce *armare*. — Further:

Kore gore corre, instead of core;

Desoro tesorro tessoro, instead of tesoro;

Ferrocie feroccie, instead of feroce;

Un baccio un bascio, instead of un bacio;

Il tchuo, instead of il tuo;

Il cello il sielo, instead of il cielo; etc.

Imagine a dramatic phrase as in "Aida"

Se quel guerrier io fossi,
 Se il mio sogno s'avverasse,
 pronounced Ze quel gueriere io fosi,
 Ze il mio sonio s'averrasse;
 or Che gelida manina
 pronounced Ke gellida mannina (or maninna). It would be simply horrible!

Sometimes the doubling or elimination of a consonant brings out some very queer mistakes in the phrase, for instance:

Caro mio ben (my beloved!)

if pronounced Carro mio ben (with one additional r) would change the meaning to my dear carriage (some difference).

Pronouncing g like a hard c in the phrase

Ell' è una vaga rosa (*She is a beautiful rose*),

and doubling the s, would make

Ell' è una vacca rossa (*She is a red cow!*) which would not be very flattering for the young maiden.

Adding, missing or eliminating an n would make some changes like the following:

Fra tante pene (*In a great sorrow*),

pronounced Fra tante penne, would make "*Among many feathers.*"

or Una furtiva lacrima dagli occhi suoi spuntò (*A sorrowful tear appeared in her eyes!*)

if sung Dagli occhi suoi sputò (eliminating the n) makes *She spat out of her eyes a sorrowful tear!* Horrible, isn't it?

Very often, too, they pronounce the Italian e like two vowels ending with an additional i, making the e sound like ei; this phrase, Tacea la notte placida, they sing Taceia la notte placida; or Voi che sapete, they sing Voi chei sapeitei; etc.

Not less frequent are the cases when singers, especially students, put the accent on the *second vowel* on the Italian diphthongs mío, díó, túo, pronouncing mió, dió, tuó, which is as bad as the pronunciation of the words *light, my, by*, by some English pupils, who sing, for instance, the Tosti phrase:



It would take a volume to enumerate all the absurdities, the distortions of words, sometimes so bad as to embarrass the singer who sees the audience smiling in a significant way; but I believe that, reading all the examples given in this book, the student, or the singer, will try not only to avoid these mistakes, but also to understand the great importance, or, rather, the *necessity* for a *really good diction*, and to study it seriously for his own sake and success.

The Recitative

The lack of consideration of average pupils for the recitative is much to be deplored. They not only neglect the recitative when studying operatic arias, especially those of the old or classic repertoire, but they consider it a nuisance.

One frequently hears even celebrated concert singers who, although performing an aria with some artistic skill, neglect the recitative in an unmistakable way. The more diligent sing the recitatives like school children who have memorized their morning lesson. This is due to the fact that, not being interested in the recitative, they very often do not even take the trouble to find out what they are singing about.

In the old repertoire of lyric drama the *recitativo* was of great importance; its effect depended almost entirely on the individual interpretation of the artist. It was the touchstone for the artistic intellectuality of a singer.

Nowadays the *recitativo* has turned into a kind of melopœia, something between a melody and a *recitativo*; nevertheless, it is still very important, even though in another form and easier to master, the interpretation being indicated by the composer, and not too much *ad libitum*, as it was in former times.

There are several distinct forms of recitative:

The **Dramatic**, the **Melodic**, the **Monotone**, the **Giocos**, the **Classic**,
the **Colorature**, and the **Quasi parlato**.

It would take volumes to give examples of all the great variety of recitatives, with different interpretations according to the different schools and periods of lyric music.

The recitative of Wagner differs entirely from that of Verdi. The interpretations of grace-notes, gruppetti, in the classic style, are entirely different from those of modern operas and songs. Even between the classic schools of Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Gluck, Porpora, Scarlatti, Pergolesi, etc., there is a difference of interpretation, and similarly between the Italian, French, German and English classic schools — and all this without going into the details of the old and modern repertoire from Rossini to Debussy, Strauss, Mussorgsky, etc.

First Group

The **Dramatic** — the **Melodic** — the **Monotone** — the **Giocos**

Their titles explain the sentiments they express.

The *Dramatic* expresses deep sorrow — hate — great love — enthusiasm — ardent passion — something imposing or majestic; etc.

The *Melodic* expresses almost the same sentiments, but in a milder form, with moderate emphasis — with more charm than force.

The *Monotone* serves to describe delicate sweet sentiments which do not require the expansion of passion, but a quiet, soft rendering. Diction must be distinct, but smooth.

The *Giocos* expresses sentiments of a joyous character.

There are many recitatives which contain a variety of sentiments; for instance, the one of Nedda in *Pagliacci* that we give as an example, and the famous monologue of Rigoletto.

If a singer can succeed in performing all the recitatives given as examples with the expression they call for, he may rightly call himself an artist.

The study of recitative is a great help for diction and expression.

Norma, Act I: V. Bellini

Majestic — Imperative

Recitativo

Norma

Se - di - zi - o - se vo - ci, vo - ci di

guer-ra, hav-vi chial-zar-si at - ten-ta pres-so al-l'a - ra del Di-o?

Largo maestoso
ff *>* *pp*

V'ha chi pre - su - me det-tar re-spon - si al - la veg-gen - te

Nor - ma, e di Ro-ma af-fret - tar il fa-to ar -

* All these small notes to be sung *instead* of the following large notes at their equivalent value: guer-ra

ca-no? Ei non di - pen - de, no, non di - pen - de da po - te - re u -

ma - no. lo ne' vo - lu - mi ar -

Allegro moderato

ca - ni leg - go del cie - lo; in

pp sempre

pa - gi - ne di mor - te del - la su - per - ba Ro - ma etc.

Tannhäuser, Act II: R. Wagner

With a deep feeling of hate and vengeance

Ortruda

Qui av - vin - ta son... a - spet - ta non par -

tir... da lo splen - dor del - l'a - bor - ri - ta fe - sta at -

tin - ger vo' ter - ri - bi - le ve - len, che a noi l'o -

nor, a lor la mor - - tear - re - chi! *etc.*

f *fp* *p* *pp*

I Pagliacci, Act I: R. Leoncavallo

With a tragic accent of bitter sorrow and despair

Canio

Re - ci - tar! Men - tre pre - so dal de - li -

rio non so più quel che di - co e — quel che fac - cio!... Ep - pur è

d'uo - po... sfor - za - ti! Bah! Sei tu for - se un uom?

precipitato

rit. ah! ah! ah! ah! ah! Tu sei Pa - gliac - cio!

etc.

rit.

La Favorita, Act II: G. Donizetti

With great excitement

Allegro agitato

Leonora

Fia dun - que ve-ro... Ah ciel!

p

des - so Fer - nan - do lo spo - so di Leo -

f

no - ra! Si...

f

lento

Tut - to mel di - ce e dub - bia l'al - ma an - co - ra al - l'in - at -

lento
p

te - sa gio - ja! Ah Di - o! Spo - sar - lo...

Ah! mia ver - go - gna e - stre - ma! In do - te al

pro - de re - car il di - so - nor?... no... ma - il *etc.*

Tannhäuser, Act II: R. Wagner

With love's noble enthusiasm

Elizabeth

Sal - ve, d'a - mor — re - cin - to e - let - to! Fe - -

li - ce al-fin io rie - do a te!

p

A

scior - re car-miil mio di - let - to, a te ri -

ff

tor - na, ei tor - na a me! Da ch'ei da te par -

ti - va, de - ser - - to fo - stio - gnor, la

gio - - ia a te fug - gi - - - va,

la pa - - ce a que - - sto cor.

Un Ballo in Maschera, Act III: G. Verdi

With a severe and noble accent

Andante

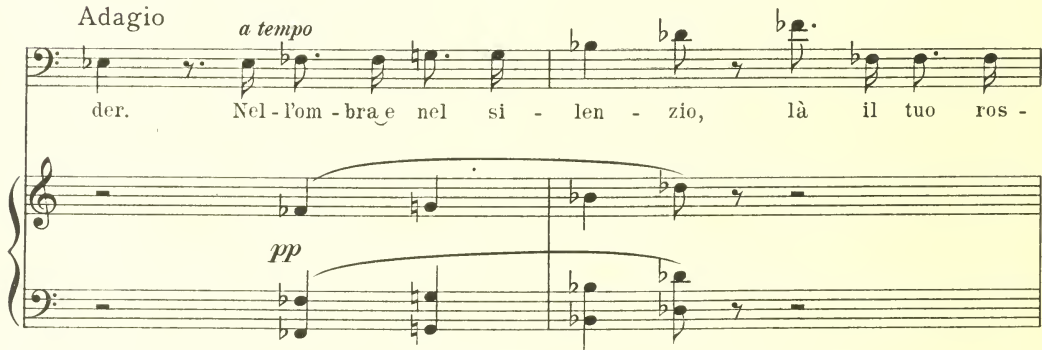
Renato



Al - za - ti! là tuo fi - gli - o a te con - ce - do ri - ve -

Adagio

a tempo



der. Nel - l'om - bra e nel si - len - zio, là il tuo ros -



so - re e l'on - ta mia na - scon - di!

Faust, Act IV: C. Gounod

With dramatic intensity — a vehement impulse of joy

Recitativo

Margherita

Ah! la sua vo-ce al cor suo - nò, a quel - la

Faust

vo - ce il cor si ria - ni - mò. Mar - ghe - ri - ta!

Margherita

Pur fra il ri - so bef - far - do dei de - mo - ni da cui cin - ta son

i - o ri - co - nob - bi quel suon... la

The first system of the musical score. The vocal line is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It begins with a half note 'i', followed by a quarter rest, then eighth notes 'o', 'ri', 'co', 'nob', 'bi', and 'quel'. After a quarter rest, there is a half note 'suon...', followed by a quarter rest and a half note 'la'. The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand with a descending eighth-note scale (F#4 to D5) and a left hand with a sustained G major triad (G2, B2, D3).

man, — la ma - no sua m'at - ti - ro... io son sal - va... e-gliè

The second system of the musical score. The vocal line continues with a half note 'man,', a quarter rest, eighth notes 'la', 'ma', 'no', a quarter note 'sua', eighth notes 'm'at', 'ti', a quarter rest, eighth notes 'ro...', a half note 'io', eighth notes 'son', a quarter rest, eighth notes 'sal', a quarter rest, eighth notes 'va...', a quarter rest, and a half note 'e-gliè'. The piano accompaniment features a right hand with a descending eighth-note scale (F#4 to D5) and a left hand with a sustained G major triad (G2, B2, D3).

qui! — Io son sal - va...e-gliè qui, a me vien al mio piè!

etc.

The third system of the musical score. The vocal line begins with a half note 'qui!', a quarter rest, a half note 'Io', eighth notes 'son', a quarter rest, eighth notes 'sal', a quarter rest, eighth notes 'va...', eighth notes 'e-gliè', a quarter rest, eighth notes 'qui,', eighth notes 'a me vien al mio', eighth notes 'piè!', and a quarter rest. The piano accompaniment features a right hand with a descending eighth-note scale (F#4 to D5) and a left hand with a sustained G major triad (G2, B2, D3). The system concludes with the word 'etc.'.

Faust, Act I: C. Gounod

With charm and modest simplicity

p Faust

Per - met - te - re - ste a me, mia

bel - la da - mi - gel - la, Che v'of - fra il brac - cio mio per

Margherita

far la stra - da in - slem? No si - gnor... io non son da - mi -

gel - la ne bel - la, da - mi - gel - la ne

bel - la, e d'uo - po non ho del brac - cio d'un Si - gnor. — *etc.*

col canto

Rigoletto, Act II: G. Verdi

With graceful emotion

Allegretto *Gilda*

Si - gnor ne prin - ci - pe

lo lo vor - re - i, Sen-to che

po - ve-ro, sen-to che po - ve-ro più l'a-me - re - i;

So - gnan-do o vi - gi-le sem - pre lo chia-mo

e l'al - ma in e - sta - si gli di - ce: t'a - mo!

La Sonnambula, Act III: V. Bellini

With much simplicity and tenderness

Recitativo

Amina

Ca - re com - pa - gne, e vo - i, te - ne - ria -

mi - ci, che al - la gio - ia mi - a tan - ta par - te pren -

de - te, oh co - me dol - ci scen - don d'A - mi - na al

co - re i can - ti che v'in - spi - ra il vo - stro a - mo - re!

Andante

Recit.

A te, di-

let-ta, te - ne - ra ma - dre, che a sì lie - to gior - no me or - fa - nel - la ser -

pp

Rec.

ba - sti, a te fa - vel - li que - sto, dal cor più che dal ci - glio e -

pp

Rec.

* spres - so, dol - ce pian - to di gio - ia, dol - ce pian - to di *

ff

gio - ia, e que - st'am - ples - so.

Andante mosso

pp

p

con tenero accento

Com - pa-gne...

te - ne - ria - mi-ci... ah!

ma - dre... ah! qual gio - ia!

Lohengrin, Act III: R. Wagner

With serene and noble calm

Lento

Lohengrin

Da voi lon-tan, in sco-no-sciu-ta ter-ra,

Red.

* Red.

hav-vi un ca-stel che ha no-me Mon-sal-va-to; là un sa-cro tem-pio u-na fo-

* Red.

re-sta ser-ra, di gem-me sen-za pa-rie d'o-ro or-na-to; i-vi u-na

*

Red.

*

cop-pa, che del cie-lo è do-no, guar-da-ta è qual re-li-qua del Si-gnor; a

Red.

*

Il Trovatore, Act IV: G. Verdi

With gentle sadness

Adagio (♩ = 60)

Leonora

Ti-mor di

me? Si-cu-ra, pre-sta è la mia di-fe-sa!

pp

In que-st'o-scu-ra not-te, rav-vol-ta pres-so a te son

ppp

First system of the musical score. The vocal line (treble clef) contains the lyrics: "i - o, e tu nol sa - i! Gemen - te au - ra che in - tor - no". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features chords and moving lines in the right and left hands.

Second system of the musical score. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "spi - ri, deh, pi - e - to - sa, deh, pi - e -". The piano accompaniment continues with harmonic support.

Third system of the musical score, marked *dolce*. The vocal line begins with the lyrics: "to - - sa, gli ar - re - ca i miei so - spi - - ri!". The piano accompaniment features sustained chords and melodic fragments.

Faust, Act III: C. Gounod

Margherita
p

Co - me vor - rei sa - per del gio - vin ch'ho in - con - tra - to

le qua - li - tà, il na - tal, — e co - me vien chia - ma - to!

Mignon, Act I: A. Thomas

Andantino
Mignon

Di - man, di' tu?... chis - sà do - ve sa - rem do -

ma - ni? A Dio sol - tan - to è no - to, che tut - to ha nel - le

ma - ni. Son chia - ma - ta Mi - gnon, al - tro no - me non ho. etc.

I Pagliacci, Act I: R. Leoncavallo

With jesting buffoonery

Vivo (*in uno*) (♩ = 112)

Canio

Un gran - - - de spet - ta - co - lo a ven - ti - trè o - -

re pre - pa - ra il vo - str'u - mi - le e buon ser - vi -

p. *l.h.*

to - - - - re! Ve - dre - te le

l.h.

sma - - - nie del bra - vo Pa - gl'ac - cio; e co - m'e i si ven -

tr.

- di - ca e ten - de un bel lac - cio... Ve - dre - te di

incalz. *pp* *l.h.* *incalz.* *e*

To - nio tre - mar la car - cas - sa, e qua - le ma - tas - sa d'in - tri - ghi or - di -

cresc. a poco a poco

ra. Ve - ni - - te, o - no -

rit. sf con eleganza

ra - te - ci si - gno - - ri e si - gno - re. A

cedendo rall. con grazia

ven - ti - trè o - - re! A ven - ti - trè o - - re! etc.

più lento col canto

Carmen, Act I: G. Bizet

With dashing delivery – coquettishly

Carmen

Il dì che v'è - me - rò? Dav-ver, dav-ver nol

a tempo

so... è for - se giam - mai... è for - se do -

man; que-st'og - gi pe -

rò cer - to no.

I Pagliacci, Act II: R. Leoncavallo

55

With graceful playfulness

Columbine

Pa - gliac-cio mio ma - ri - - to

a tar - da not-te sol ri - tor-ne - rà...

E quel-lo sci - mu - ni - to di Tad - *11*

de - o... per-chè mai non è an-cor qua?

Rigoletto, Act II: G. Verdi

With bitter sorrow, deep sadness, anger, tenderness and joy

Adagio

Rigoletto *Sad and pensive*

Pa - ri sia - mo! io la lin - gua, e - gli ha il pu -

gna - le; l'uo - mo son io che ri - de, ei quel che

spe - gne!...

Quel vec - chio ma - le - di - va - mi!

morendo

Allegro (♩ = 120) *with bitterness*

O uo - mi-ni! o na - tu - ra! vil, scel - le - ra - to mi fa - ce - ste

vo - i! Oh rab - bia! es - ser dif -

for - me! oh rab - bia! es - ser buf -

fo - ne! Non do -

Adagio

ver, non po-ter al - tro che ri - de-re! Il re - tag - gio d'o-gni uom m'è

pp

tol - to... il pian - to!

Moderato (♩ = 96)

with sarcasm

Que - sto pa - dro - ne mi - o, gio - vin, gio -

con-do, sì pos-sen-te, bel-lo, sonnec-chian-do mi di-ce: Fa ch'io

tutta forza

ri - da, buf - fo - ne... for-zar-mi deg - g'ioe far - lo! Oh dan - na -

Ad. *

Allegro (♩ = 120)

with fury *con forza*

zio - - - ne! O-dio a vo - i, cor-ti-gia-ni scherni -

ff

to-ri!... quan-ta in mor - der-vi ho gio - ia! Se i - ni - quo

tutta forza

son, per ca - gion vo - stra è so - lo.

Andante (♩ = 76)

with tenderness

Ma in al - tr'uo - mo qui mi -

p dolce

pp

cangio! Quel vec - chio ma - le - di - va - mi!... Tal pen -

morendo *allegro*

morendo *allegro*

Red. *

sie - ro... per - chè con - tur - ba o - gnor la men - te mi - a?...

pp

Mi co - glie - rà sven - tu - ra?... Ah no! è fol - li - - a!

with joy

I Pagliacci, Act I: R. Leoncavallo

This recitative presents three different characters; - Dramatic, languid and joyful.

Dramatic from: Qual fiamma avea nel guardo *to* brutale come egli è.

Languid from: Oh che bel sole di mezz'agosto.

Joyful-enthusiastic from: Oh che volo d'augelli.

Andante con moto (♩ = 88)

Nedda

Qual fiam-ma a-vea nel guar-do!

The musical score for Nedda's recitative is written for voice and piano. The voice part is in a single melodic line with a treble clef and a common time signature. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves, treble and bass, with a common time signature. The tempo is marked 'Andante con moto' with a metronome marking of 88 quarter notes per minute. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

ritenendo un poco il tempo

Gli oc-chi ab-bas-sa - i per te-ma ch'ei leg-ges-se il mi - o pen-sier se -

The musical score continues with the same voice and piano parts. The tempo is marked 'ritenendo un poco il tempo'. The piano accompaniment features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand. The key signature changes to two flats (Bb and Eb).

con amore

ritenendo un poco il tempo

vivamente

with fear

gre - to! Oh! s'ei mi sor-pren - des - se... bru - ta - le co-me e - gli è!

The musical score continues with the same voice and piano parts. The tempo is marked 'vivamente' and 'with fear'. The piano accompaniment features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand. The key signature changes to two flats (Bb and Eb).

poco meno

calmed and smiling

Ma ba - sti or - vi - a. Son que - sti so - gni pa - u - ro - si e fo - le!

col canto

Moderato (♩ = 56)

*dolce con abbandono**poco rit.**dolce armonioso
arpeggiando*

O che bel so - le di mez - z'a - go -

poco rit.

Andantino (♩ = 88)

sto!

lo son pie - na di vi - ta, e, tut - ta il lan - gui -

*a tempo**rit. molto*

di - ta per ar - ca - ro de - sio, non so che bra - mo!

col canto

with joy

Oh! che vo - lo d'au - gel - li,

e quan - te stri - da! Che chie - don? do - ve van?

chis - sà! La mam - ma mia, che la buo - na ven - tu - ra an - nun -

zia - va, com - pren - de - va il lor

can - to e a me bam - bi - na co - sì can -

ta - va: Hui! Hui!

Second Group

The Classic- the Coloratura

The classic recitative is distinguished from the other styles by its noble and refined character. It is dramatic, but never exaggerated or too emphatic. Its declamation is always noble, even when the poem calls for the accent of despair, anger, or sorrow. In poems of love its expression requires sweet, gentle charm rather than a passionate outburst.

It is often expressed in an alluring, cunning, smiling manner, especially in all those semi-innocent Arcadian love-affairs which combine sweet simplicity with subtle refinement.

The classic recitative requires a *clear, pure diction, very well balanced*, without great affectation of sweetness, or an overflowing explosion of sentiment.

The coloratura recitative belongs to the classic or semi-classic style, in which florid vocalisation is mixed with the declamation.

The declamation stops when a vowel is prolonged *a piacere* to let the singer perform a bravura passage.

Le Nozze di Figaro, Act IV: W. A. Mozart

With joyous, loving ardor

Allegro vivace

Susanna

*

*

*

Giun-se al-fin il mo-men-to che go-drò sen-za af-fan-no In brac-cio al-l'i-dol mi-o...

* All these small notes to be sung *instead* of the following large notes at their equivalent value: mo-men-to

Ti - mi - de cu - re! u - sci - te dal mio pet - to! A tur - bar non ve - ni - te il mio di -

let - to. O co - me par che al - l'a - mo - ro - so

fo - co L'a - me - ni - ta del lo - co, La ter - ra, e il ciel ri -

sponda! Co - me la not - te i fur - ti miei se - con - da!

Armida: G. F. Händel

With profound grief

Ar - mi - da, di - spie - ta - ta, col - la for - za d'a -

bis - so ra - pim - mi al ca - ro ciel di miei con - ten - ti, e

qui con duo - lo e - ter - no vi - va mi tie - ne in tor - men - to d'in - fer - no.

mf con calore
Si - gnor! Ah, per pie - tà, la - scia - mi pian - ge - re.

Andante

Orfeo, Act II: C. W. Gluck

With a noble accent of despair

Orfeo

Ahi - mè! do - ve tra - scor - si, o - ve mi

Allegro

spin - se un de - li - rio d'a - mor?

Spo - sa, Eu - ri - di - ce!

Eu - ri - di - ce! Con - sor - te!

The first system of the musical score. The vocal line (treble clef) has two measures of rest, followed by two measures of melody. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) consists of four measures of chords and arpeggiated figures. The lyrics "Eu - ri - di - ce!" and "Con - sor - te!" are placed under the vocal notes.

Ah più non vi-ve... la chia - mo in van!

The second system of the musical score. The vocal line has a measure of rest, followed by a melodic phrase. The piano accompaniment features a prominent arpeggiated figure in the right hand and a steady bass line. The lyrics "Ah più non vi-ve... la chia - mo in van!" are placed under the vocal notes.

Mi - se - ro me! la per-do e di

The third system of the musical score. The vocal line has two measures of rest, followed by a melodic phrase. The piano accompaniment continues with arpeggiated figures. The lyrics "Mi - se - ro me! la per-do e di" are placed under the vocal notes.

nuo - vo e per sem - pre! Oh leg - ge! oh mor - te! oh ri -

The fourth system of the musical score. The vocal line has a melodic phrase. The piano accompaniment features chords and rests. The lyrics "nuo - vo e per sem - pre! Oh leg - ge! oh mor - te! oh ri -" are placed under the vocal notes.

cor - do cru - del! Non ho soc - cor - so, non m'a - van - za con -

si - glio, io veg - go so - lo (oh — fie - ra vi - sta!) il lut - tu -

o - so a - spet - to del - l'or - ri - do mio sta - to!

Sa - zia - ti, sor - te re - a!... son dis - pe - ra - to!

Gli Ugonotti, Act I: G. Meyerbeer

Urbano *Maestoso*

Lie - ti si - gnor, sa -

lu - te! lie - ti si - gnor, sa - lu - te! si -

p *f* *p*

Cadenza

gnor, sa-lu - te!

f

Semiramide, Act II: G. Rossini

Semiramide
a piacere

Bel rag - gio lu - sin - ghier di

12

spe - me, di pia - cer, al -

13

fin per me bril - lò, bril - lò, Ar -

sa - ce - ri - tor - nò, sì, a me ver - rà; que -

p *f* *p*

st'al - ma che fi - nor ge - mè, tre - mò, lan - guì, oh! co - me respi -

rò! O - gni mio duol spa - - - - - rì, spa - rì... Dal

ff *ff*

cor, dal mio pen - sier si di - le - guò il ter - ror. etc.

ff *ff* *f*

Third Group

The Quasi-parlato

It must be rendered with great freedom and vivacity of diction and with much variety of vocal inflection, in order to avoid monotony and exclude the painful impression of difficult articulation.

There are two kinds of Recitativo quasi-parlato. The one is supported by some chords (by piano or the orchestra), in order to mark the passage from one tonality to another. The other is a recitative sung with almost a speaking voice, keeping on with the orchestra, which supplies a brilliant or melodious accompaniment.

The recitative between Rosina and Figaro affords a good example of the first kind; the aria of Dulcarama a good example of the second kind. The aria of Don Basilio belongs to the style of recitativo cantato given in the form of an aria.

Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Act I: G. Rossini

Rosina

Sì, sì, la vin-ce - rò! Po-tes-si al-me-no man -

dar - gli que - sta let - te - ra. Ma co - me! Di nes-sun qui mi

fi - do: il tu - to - re ha cent' oc - chi... ba - sta, ba - sta: si - gil -

lia - mo - la in - tan - to. Con Fi - ga - ro il bar - blier dal - la fi - ne - stra di -

scor - rer l'ho ve - du - to più d'un' o - ra. Fi - ga - ro è un ga - lan -

t'uo - mo, un gio - vin di buon co - re; chi sa ch'ei non pro -

teg - ga il no - stro a - mo - re! *Figaro* Oh, buon dì, Si - gno -

Rosina Figaro

ri - na. Buon gior - no, si - gnor Fi - ga - ro. Eb - be - ne? che si

Rosina Figaro

fa? Si muor di no - ia. Oh dia - vo - lo! pos - si - bi - le! U - na ra -

Rosina

gaz - za bel - la e spi - ri - to - sa - Ah! ah! mi fa - te

ri - de - re! Che mi ser - ve lo spi - ri - to, che gio - va la bel -

lez - za, se chiu - sa sem - pre sto fra quat - tro mu - ra, che mi

Figaro

par d'es-ser pro-prio in se-pol - tu - ra? In se-pol - tu - ra? oi - bò! Sen -

Rosina

Figaro

Rosina

ti - te: io vo - glio - Ec - co il tu - tor. Dav - ve - ro? Cer - to,

Figaro

cer-to... è il suo pas-so. Sal-va, sal-va! fra po-co ci ri-ve-

Rosina

dre-mo: ho da dir-vi qual-che co-sa. E an-cor i-o, si-gnor

Figaro

Rosina

Fi-ga-ro. Bra-vis-si-ma! Va-do. Quan-to è gar-ba-to!

Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Act I: G. Rossini

Basilio

La ca - lun-nia è un ven - ti -

cel - lo, un' au - ret-ta

as - sai gen - ti - le, che in-sen-si-bi-le, sot - ti - le,

leg - ger-men - te, dol - ce - men - te in - co - min - cia, in - co -

p

min - cia a su - sur - rar. Pia - no

pp

pia - no, ter - ra ter - ra,

sot - to vo - ce si - bi -

lan-do va scorren-do, va scor-ren - - -

p

do, va ron-zan - do, va ron-zan - - - do; nel-lò-rec-chie del-la

cresc. e poco

gen - te s'in-tro - du - ce, s'in-tro - du - ce de - stra -

men - te, e le te - sted i cer - vel - li, e le te - sted i cer -

cresc.

vel - li fa stor - di - re, fa stor - di - re, fa stor - di - re e fa gon -

fiar. Dal-la boc-ca fuo-ri u-

p

scen - do lo schia-maz-zo va cre-scen-do,

cresc.

pren - de for - za a po-co a po - co,

8

vo - la già di lo-co in lo - co, sem-brail tuo - no, la tem -

pe - sta che nel sen del - la fo - re - sta va fi-schian - do, bron - to -

8

lan - do, e ti fa d'or - ror ge - lar. Al - la fin tra-boc - ca e

8

ff

scop - pia, si pro-pa - ga, si rad-dop - pia e pro-du - ce un' e - splo-sio - ne! *etc.*

8

L'Elisir d'amore, Act I: G. Donizetti

Allegro

Dulcamara

È que-sto l'o-don - tal-gi - co, mi - ra - bi - le li -

quo - re, dei to - pie del - le ci - mi - ci pos - sen - te di - strut -

to - re. I cui cer - ti - fi - ca - ti au - ten - ti - ci, bol -

la - ti toc - car, ve - de - re e leg - ge - re a cia - sche - dun fa -

rò. Per que - sto mio spe - ci - fi - co, sim - pa - ti - co, pro -

p

li - fi - co, un uom set - tua - ge - na - rio e va - le - tu - di -

na - rio, non - no di die - ci bam - bo - li an - co - ra di - ven -

tò, di die-cio ven - ti bam - bo - li fin non - no di - ven -

tò. Per que - sto toc - ca e sa - na in bre - ve set - ti -

ma - na più d'un' af - flit - ta ve - do - va di pian - ge - re ces - sò.

A Few More Useful Suggestions

I would recommend to advanced pupils the study of classic song, in which the pure style of diction is coupled with *Bel Canto*. The study of such songs will benefit both diction and voice, if performed in the way required by the correct classic style. Then the student can study operatic or concert songs adapted to his artistic style and vocal capabilities, but never neglecting the diction.

Learn the words of your songs by heart, giving all the expressions, the inflections, the emphasis, as if you were speaking, declaiming them, impersonating the character you represent, or the poem you interpret. Never excuse your bad diction by saying that there are prominent artists whose diction is not perfect. It is a poor excuse and, besides, they may have some other artistic qualities which you do not possess. To form a good, effective diction requires as much study and constant research as the forming of a good tone.

Good tone-production makes a good vocalist; good diction makes an artist.

Songs to be Practised According to the Examples Given in the Book

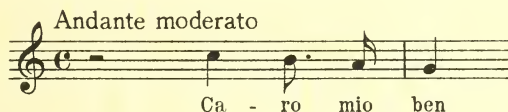
We suggest the study of the following songs to the student, which will give a clear conception of the different expressions in diction.

The songs selected for such study belong for the most part to the classic school, which is the foundation of clear diction and can furnish the most efficient examples of different expressions, without complicating the study of artistic diction with too many confusing examples of the innumerable styles of music.

Once well acquainted with all the songs suggested, it will be an easy matter for the intelligent student to apply the different color of expression to any other style of music.

Calma e Serena

(Giordani)



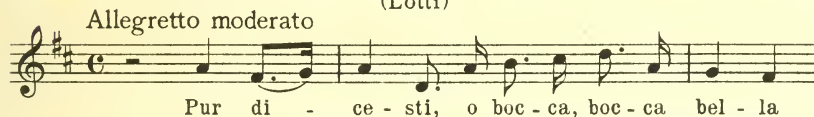
Very Even and Clear, Legato

(Ave Maria: Tosti)



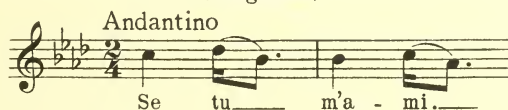
Graceful and Joyful

(Lotti)



With Sweet Simplicity

(Pergolese)



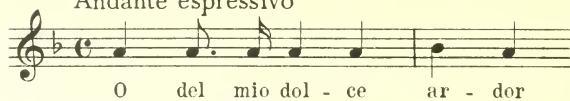
Sostenuto Mesto

(Händel)

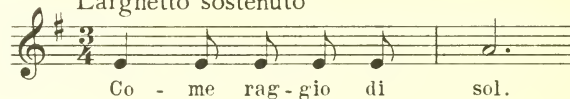


Sostenuto Amoroso

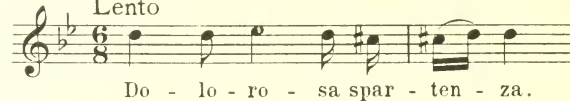
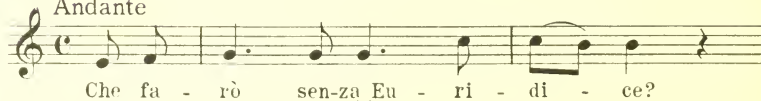
(Gluck)

Andante espressivo**Piano dolce espressivo***(Ideale: Tosti)**Moderato***Calmo sostenuto**

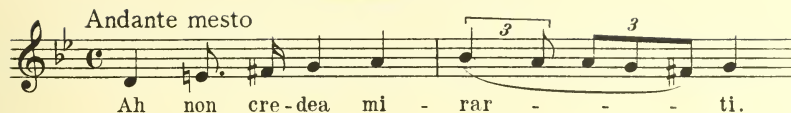
(Caldara)

Larghetto sostenuto**Accentato doloroso**

(Scarlatti)

Andante mosso**Largo grave, dolente***(Separazione: Sgambati)**Lento***Espressivo drammatico mesto***(Orfeo: Gluck)**Andante*

Triste melodioso
(*La Sonnambula*: Bellini)



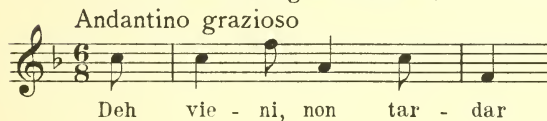
Dolce Amoro
(*L'Elisir d'amore*: Donizetti)



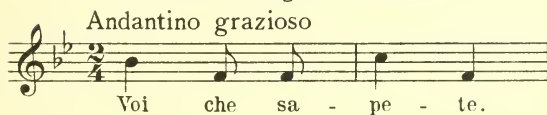
With wild expression
(*Il Trovatore*: Verdi)



Amoroso giocondo
(*Le Nozze di Figaro*: Mozart)



Con furba semplicità
(*Le Nozze di Figaro*: Mozart)

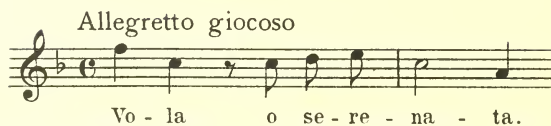


Diction: Vivace, giocosa. with smiling quality
(*La Bella Calandrina*: Jommelli)



Diction: free flowing and melodious

(*Serenata*: Tosti)



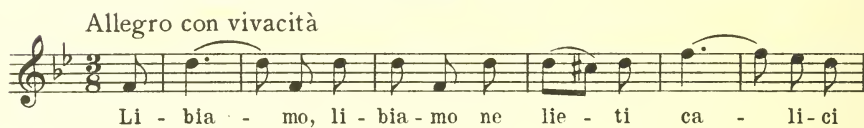
With great brilliancy

(*Lucrezia Borgia*: Donizetti)



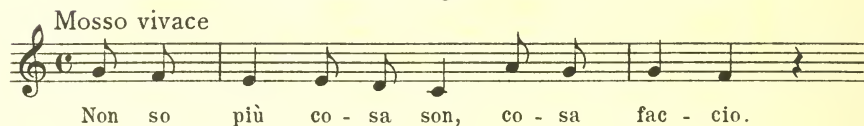
Con vivacità e slancio

(*La Traviata*: Verdi)

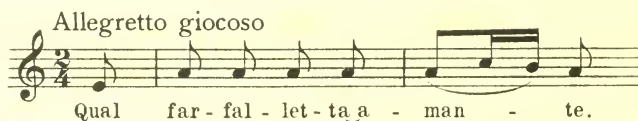


Clear, quick diction; great flexibility of articulation

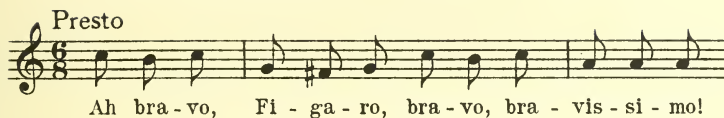
(*Le Nozze di Figaro*: Mozart)



(Scarlatti)



(Il Barbiere di Siviglia: Rossini)



Although coloratura and correct diction do not seem to go together very happily, there is a certain kind of semi-coloratura which needs good diction. We will call it *Coloratura espressiva*.

It is that kind of coloratura which requires expressive diction. This is because it represents a *melodic phrase*, and not a *bravura passage*.

In the old operatic repertoire (classic music, oratorios) one very frequently finds such a kind of *agilità fraseggiata* (Phrased coloratura).

Coloratura dolce espressiva

(Lucrezia Borgia: Donizetti)



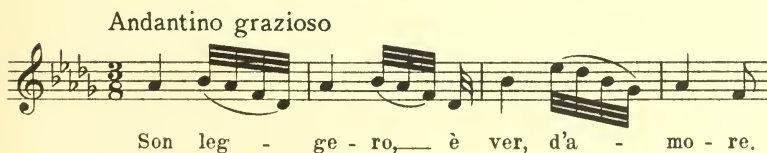
Dolce espressiva

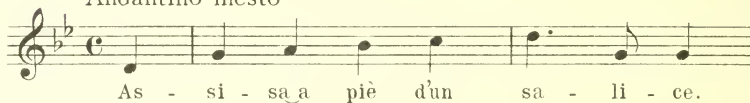
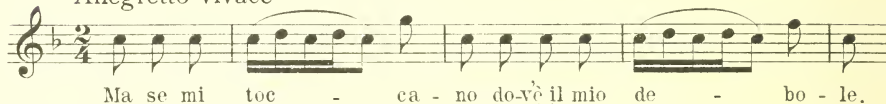
(Norma: Bellini)



Elegant, graceful, smiling

(Maria di Rohan: Donizetti)



Light, quick diction*(Dinorah: Meyerbeer)***Allegretto moderato****Triste e legato***(Otello: Rossini)***Andantino mesto****Brilliant, coquettish***(Il Barbiere di Siviglia: Rossini)***Allegretto vivace****Coloratura tragica (strong accent)***(Norma: Bellini)***Allegro energico**

I believe that, with all the examples given in this book, the intelligent student will have enough material to work on and have a clear idea of what correct diction means.

It goes without saying how much easier it will be for the vocal master to teach the foundation of correct diction with the help of this book.

Keep constantly in mind the old saying of the great vocal masters: *Chi ben pronuncia, ben canta* (*He who enunciates well, sings well*), which is a great truth.





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